

# NAVY MEDICINE LIVE

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## Mission Complete for Navy Medicine at EMF-Kuwait

Filed under UNCATEGORIZED

(6 COMMENTS)

By Capt. Gerald Cox, Force Surgeon, Commander, U.S. Naval Forces, Central Command and the Fleet Surgeon for the U.S. Fifth Fleet



Capt. Dick Turner, commanding officer, EMF Kuwait shakes hands with Col. Joe Robinson, commanding officer, 325th CSH (FWD).  
(Photo courtesy of EMF Kuwait)

This week I had the honor of presiding at the final Navy Change of Command and Transfer of Authority ceremony at Expeditionary Medical Facility-Kuwait (EMF-K) during which Navy Capt. Dick Turner, NC, was relieved by Army Col. Joe Robinson, MC, USA, commander of the Army's 325th Combat Support Hospital (CSH). On this momentous occasion Nov 3., the Navy's seven and a half year long commitment to provide health service support in Kuwait came to an end. Capt. Turner and the remaining members of Detachment Lima — the 12th and final Navy rotation — declared their "mission complete" and will redeploy home in a few days. EMF-K's organizational colors were furled, encased, and prepared for eventual delivery to the Navy Medicine historian who works at the Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery in Washington, DC.

Navy Medicine assumed this mission April 1, 2004 from the Army's 801st CSH in a Transfer of Authority ceremony at

Camp Doha. Shortly thereafter Capt. Marty Snyder and his team from Naval Medical Center Portsmouth constructed the original 44-bed tent hospital near EMF-K's current location on Camp Arifjan. (The existing brick-and-mortar facility opened in August 2008.) In the spring of 2005 a team composed largely of reserve Navy medical professionals from EMF-Dallas took over under the leadership of Capt. Jack Riggs. Since October of that year, however, the Navy has sourced the EMF-K mission with individual augmentees deployed from our commands around the globe. While most of them deployed for six month rotations, Det Lima remained in Kuwait for nine months to help ensure a smooth transition back to the Army. In all more than 4,100 Sailors served at EMF-K from 2004 to 2011.

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Capt. Turner was the ninth and last Navy Commanding Officer of EMF-K. Most of those who preceded him went on to subsequent command assignments, and many remain on active duty today. In addition to Capt. Snyder and Capt. Riggs, they include Capt. Catherine Wilson, Rear Adm. Forrest Faison, Capt. Kevin Moore, Rear Adm. Elaine Wagner, Capt. Lynn Welling, and Capt. Ken Iverson.

The event on Nov. 3 likewise marks the end of the mission of the Navy's Forward Deployed Preventive Medicine Unit-Kuwait, which has provided theater-wide preventive medicine and public health services during six deployment rotations.

The proud history of Expeditionary Medical Facility-Kuwait's support to hundreds of thousands of warfighters in this area of responsibility — which included major combat operations, troop surges, and eventually drawdowns in both Iraq and Afghanistan — thus becomes part of Navy Medicine's enduring legacy on this date. I am extremely proud to have been witness to just a small part of that history.

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Shay  
Nice to hear the Army's taking it back. I served under Capt Wilson from Sep '05 to March '06 as HN Samuelson. My very first deployment in the Navy.  
-HM2 Samuelson, veteran

Shay  
Nice to hear that they Army's taking it back. I served under Capt Wilson as HN Samuelson from September '05 to March '06. This was my first deployment in the Navy and I made some great friends there.  
-HM2 Samuelson, veteran

LS2 Weissman  
I was there around that time in '05 delivering medical supplies to the camps. What a time it was, even though there were bad times, I remember many more good times and great staff.

HM2 Boyce  
I was there from December 2008 – July 2009 at Ali Al Salem. There were only 8 of us at the clinic, but I learned a lot. Forced all of us to do multiple jobs, but wouldn't have traded it for anything. Sad in a way to see it go away.

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